

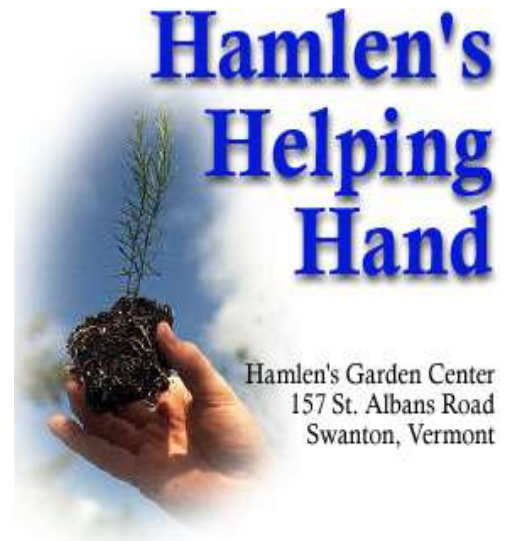
Welcome to Hamlen's Helping Hand!

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This is our Summer newsletter, the 3rd newsletter of 2004.  
We look forward to seeing you at the garden center.

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## The Perfect Time to Plant Trees & Shrubs

Cool temperatures and autumn rainfall make for a great planting season. Dig a good hole first- twice the diameter of the root ball and the same depth of the root ball.

Before putting the plant in the hole, work in a few shovel fulls of peat moss along with some bone meal and root stimulator, add water to the hole and mix well. Add the plant to the hole and backfill with existing topsoil.



## Select and Plant Shrubs to Lure Birds to the Garden

Autumn is the perfect time to select and plant shrubs that can transform your garden into a "mini" bird sanctuary. Shrubs offer food and protection for just enough feathered friends to add life and song to your garden.

Some good shrub choices for birds are winterberry, viburnum, rosa rugosa, some crabapples, service berry, elderberry, chokeberry, and many others. These are all good hardy shrubs for our area. So beautify your home landscape and help our wild friends at the same time.



Fall berries are a special treat for wild birds. The fruit from many popular garden shrubs attracts cardinals, hummingbirds, orioles, thrushes, and other birds noted for beautiful plumage or song.

## Time to Repair Lawns



If your lawn looks like it needs help, autumn is the season to assess any damage, devise a strategy for repairs and, most importantly, to take action. The best time to seed your lawn is mid-August to the third week of September.

More often than not, a sickly lawn can be revived without any drastic measures. Easy-to-use soil-testing kits will reveal if soil is too acidic or too alkaline. Improper pH reduces the availability of nutrients to grass roots-even if soil is fertile. Apply lime to correct acidity and sulphur to correct alkalinity. Ideal pH range for a lawn is 6 to 7 on the pH scale. When the pH is between 6 & 7 weeds have a

harder time to grow.

Here is an inexpensive, three step fall rejuvenation plan: 1) adjust soil pH; 2) make an extra application of lawn fertilizer; and 3) raise your lawn mower blade one-half inch or more. Tall grass recuperates more readily than clipped short.

If a dramatic improvement does not help, the cause may be compacted soil or a thick thatch layer. Both conditions prevent moisture and oxygen from reaching the roots. Unlike flower beds and vegetable gardens, lawns are rarely dug up and turned over to improve soil aeration and drainage. An aerator is a power-driven drum mounted with hollow cores. The cores penetrate the lawn and remove finger sized plugs of earth. Grass grows rapidly over the narrow holes, which eventually refill themselves. In the meantime, the soil's permeability is substantially improved.

Rejuvenated grass grows vigorously enough to fill in small bare spots throughout the lawn. Patches larger than 9 or 10 inches across must be reseeded. Remove all dead or unhealthy grass from within or around each spot. With a spade, mix into the soil a two or three-inch layer of peat moss plus a dusting of fertilizer.

Roll the soil with a roller so it is level with the surrounding earth. Sprinkle grass seed sparingly over the spot and rake the seed about one-eighth inch down. Roll the soil again and then water thoroughly. cover the spot with a thin layer of straw to retain moisture. Reseeded areas should be kept constantly moist throughout germination.

## Planting Spring Flowering Bulbs

Autumn is the only time to plant spring-flowering bulbs. They require a few months of in-ground refrigeration to perform their spring magic. Hamlen's Garden Center has bulbs in all colors, sizes, and shapes. Some bulbs bravely sprout in late winter. Late bloomers delay their appearances almost until summer. Countless other bulbs burst into bloom during the weeks in between. Colorful crocuses are famous for breaking through frozen earth or melting snow. Snowdrops may unfurl even earlier. Soon there-after daffodils pop up everywhere, and hyacinths spread their aroma. By mid-spring tulips are in their glory.



Most bulb plants prefer sunshine, but because they flower before shade trees are fully in leaf, bulbs will brighten almost any garden spot. Plant them in flower beds, shrub borders and along walkways. Or

create naturalistic clusters of bulbs in lawns and around tree bases. For "naturalizing," daffodils and crocuses work well. Stop by Hamlen's Garden Center for all your spring bulbs and supplies!

## Hamlen's Trip to Les Quatre Vent

On Tuesday August 10th, 12 of us left from Hamlen's garden center for a two day trip to Quebec. Our first stop was at Hamel's (not related to us), a garden center on the outside of Quebec City. Anne & Dave Hamlen obtained directions while camping on Cape Cod the week before from people next to their campsite who were from Quebec City (didn't someone say something about a small world). At Hamel's we stopped and compared the garden center merchandise with our own and looked at how they market their plants. Since many of us had never been to Quebec City we spent a couple of hours touring the old section. We ate lunch at an outside café; and loved the European feel of the city.

We left Quebec City for a four hour drive north to La Malbaie on the St. Lawrence. The area is forested, very hilly, and has gorgeous views of The St. Lawrence River. La Malbaie is a very beautiful area. We spent the night in a motel over looking the bay.

The next morning we met for breakfast before setting out to visit the gardens at Les Quatre Vent. It is the home of Frank Cabot and is open to the public in the summer on a limited basis. We had a beautiful summer day, and the gardens were unbelievable, we spent the morning walking across the rope bridges, visiting the Japanese tea house, dancing in the Pigeonnier (Katrina from our group started it), walking over moon bridge, and being absorbed in the gardens. After lunch we headed home to Vermont, it was a wonderful two day visit to Canada.

### Les Quatre Vent

Les Quatre Vent is twenty-five acres of private gardens located in La Malbaie, Quebec. It is tended by six full time gardeners and Frank Cabot the owner. If you would like to visit the gardens (a must for anyone who appreciates plants and landscapes) you can do so by requesting an invitation to the gardens. The telephone # to call to request an invitation is 845-265-2011 or email hortus@highlands.com Please don't just drive up there expecting to get in. They do not want a lot of people trampling over plants and misusing the property. You will need your invitation in hand when you arrive. You will want to apply by Feb. for your invitation to see the gardens for that year. We think, if you are able to get in, you will be very impressed with what they have there.

**Photo Gallery in online version.**

## The Adventures of Binocular Bob

Dear Hamlen's Garden Center,  
I'm devastated and just heart sick. You let binocular Bob leave. How could you? He was always looking at me from behind those glasses and I could always feel there was a spark in his eyes that in time would glow and grow into something wonderful between us. You told me he was just peering for bugs on the begonias and there he was looking for mites on the marigolds. He was so sweet and gentle. Tell me he is coming back.



Signed,  
Heartsick Rosie

**Editor's note:**

Dear Rosie,

We had no idea there was something going on between you and Bob. We will keep you posted as to where Bob's next adventure is. If Bob is this important to you I wouldn't give up on him. Perhaps our newsletter would be a good venue for the two of you to correspond. I don't think our readers will mind. We wouldn't want you to become a bleeding heart.

## Hamming It Up

It rained so much on our vacation, instead of a sunburn we came back with rust.

## Hamlines

"When a man plants a tree he plants himself. Every root is an anchor..."

***John Muir***

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**Hamlen's Garden Center**

Route 7, 157 St. Albans Road, Swanton, Vermont 05488  
(802) 868-4255 - (888) 426-5367 - [hamlens@sover.net](mailto:hamlens@sover.net)

Web Site maintained by: [Advantage Creations](#), Burlington, Vermont